

CPTSD Healing Workbook

A Friendly Guide to Understanding
and Managing Complex PTSD

BY JACK BRODY
AboutThatJack.com



About That Jack

Welcome to Your CPTSD Healing Workbook

Hey, I'm Jack. If you're here, maybe you're trying to make sense of CPTSD, Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or just looking for some ways to cope. First off, good on you for showing up for yourself. That's huge.

This workbook is designed to be a friendly companion on your healing journey. There's no rush, no right or wrong way to use it. Think of it as your space to pause, reflect, and find tools that work for you. You'll find simple explanations, journaling prompts, and exercises to help you understand your feelings, recognize your triggers, and build your own healing plan, one small step at a time.

Ready? Let's get started.

What CPTSD Feels Like

CPTSD isn't just about feeling stressed after trauma. It's a complex mix of emotions, memories, and reactions that can sneak up on you when you least expect it.

Some common ways CPTSD shows up:

- Feeling on edge or easily startled
- Struggling to trust people
- Intense emotions that feel overwhelming
- Feeling disconnected from yourself or others
- Flashbacks or intrusive memories
- Trouble managing anger, sadness, or anxiety
-

Everyone's experience is different, and that's okay.

Journaling Prompt

Take a moment and write:

“When I notice my CPTSD acting up, I usually feel...” Try to be honest and kind with yourself here.

Identifying Your Triggers

Triggers are those sneaky things that set off your CPTSD reactions. They might be sounds, places, smells, or even certain conversations. Sometimes, they remind your brain of past pain, even if the present moment is safe.

Knowing your triggers is powerful because it helps you prepare or even avoid getting overwhelmed.

Examples of triggers:

- Loud noises or sudden sounds
- Crowded places
- Certain words or tones of voice
- Feeling ignored or abandoned
- Specific smells or sights

Journaling Prompt

Write down a few things that you've noticed tend to set off your CPTSD:

"I've noticed these things tend to set off my CPTSD..."

Grounding Techniques

When CPTSD floods in, grounding helps you get back to now, to your body and surroundings, instead of getting lost in overwhelming emotions or memories.

One simple grounding trick is the 3-3-3 Rule:

- Look around and name 3 things you can see
- Listen and name 3 things you can hear
- Focus and name 3 parts of your body you can feel

Try it next time you feel overwhelmed.

Breathing Exercise (Box Breathing):

- Breathe in slowly for 4 seconds
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds
- Breathe out slowly for 4 seconds
- Hold for 4 seconds
- Repeat a few times

Journaling Prompt

After trying grounding, write:

“Which grounding tool helped me most today?”

Introducing Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Ever feel like different parts of you are having their own little arguments? That's actually pretty normal.

IFS is a way to understand those “parts” inside you, like the scared part, the protective part, or the part that just wants to shut down.

Think of it like a team inside you, all trying to keep you safe in their own way, even if it doesn't always feel helpful.

Try this:

- Name one part of you that feels protective.
- Name one part that feels scared or vulnerable.

Journaling Prompt

Write:

“What does my protective part want me to know?”

Understanding Attachment Styles

Our early relationships teach us how to connect, or sometimes, how not to connect. Attachment styles are patterns in how we relate to others emotionally.

If you've felt like relationships are confusing, intense, or scary, that might be your attachment style showing up.

The big types are:

- Secure: Comfortable with closeness
- Avoidant: Keeping distance to feel safe
- Anxious: Worrying about being abandoned
- Fearful-Avoidant: Both wanting connection but also pushing it away

Journaling Prompt

Think about your relationships and write:

"How do I usually react when someone gets close to me?"

Setting Boundaries

Boundaries are your personal “no-go” zones. They protect your energy and feelings so you don’t get drained or hurt.

Setting boundaries isn’t about pushing people away, it’s about saying, “This is what I need to feel safe and respected.”

Examples of healthy boundaries:

- Saying no without guilt
- Taking time for yourself when you need it
- Letting others know what feels okay and what doesn’t

Journaling Prompt

Write down one boundary you want to practice:

“One boundary I want to practice is...”

Creating a Healing Plan

Healing isn't a race. It's about small steps that add up over time. Your plan can include simple daily or weekly goals that align with your needs.

Remember, healing isn't one-size-fits-all. What works for someone else might not be right for you, and that's totally okay.

Here are some ideas, but remember, your plan should fit you:

Ideas for your healing plan:

- Practice grounding once a day
- Journal for 5 minutes about your feelings
- Reach out to a trusted friend or therapist
- Take 10 minutes for self-care every day

Journaling Prompt

Set a goal and write:

“My next small step toward healing is...”

Encouragement & Affirmations

Healing is messy, non-linear, and sometimes frustrating. But every step you take matters, even the small ones.

Remember: It's okay to have setbacks. What matters most is that you keep showing up for yourself.

Here are some affirmations you can say or write each day:

- I am worthy of healing and peace.
- It's okay to take things one step at a time.
- I am not my trauma; I am more than my past.
- I deserve to feel safe and loved.

Journaling Prompt

Write:

“What's one thing I'm proud of about myself today?”

Resources & Notes

If you want to learn more or get extra support, check out these resources:

- About That Jack - [CPTSD vs PTSD](#).
- About That Jack - [Resources & Tools](#)

Notes:
